



URBAN DISTRICT OF BURNHAM-ON-SEA

ANNUAL REPORT

of the

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

FOR THE YEAR 1952

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R.H. WATSON, M.B., B.Ch., B.A.O., D.P.H.

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH



BURNHAM-ON-SEA URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR 1952

Health Department,  
Albert Steet,  
Bridgwater.

July, 1953

To:-

The Chairman and Members of the  
Burnham-on-Sea Urban District Council

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

I have pleasure in presenting my Annual Report for the year 1952.

The health of the community has been good and there were no large outbreaks of any of the notifiable infectious diseases. A widespread outbreak of Influenza affected the District at the beginning of the year, but generally speaking the disease was of a mild nature, the patients being confined to bed for a few days, and serious complications were seldom seen. No serious disturbance of essential services was caused by this epidemic.

THE BIRTH RATE was 15.52, the Corrected Birth Rate being 17.23, as compared with that of the previous year of 17.11. The Provisional Birth Rate for England and Wales was 15.3.

THE DEATH RATE was 13.18, the Corrected Death Rate being 10.28, as compared with that of the previous year of 13.86. The Provisional Death Rate for England and Wales was 11.3.

THE INFANTILE MORTALITY RATE was 13.7, which shows a very considerable decrease on that for the previous year which was 27.8.

Housing.

During the year 53 permanent houses were erected by the Local Authority, and 13 by Private Enterprise. A further 60 houses were under construction by the local Authority and 19 by Private Enterprise. However, despite the fact that the Authority has built 236 Post War Houses, the number of applicants for rehousing continues to grow and at the end of the year the figure had risen to 596.

I wish to record my appreciation of the help and co-operation received from the Council and members of staff.

I am,

Your obedient servant,

R.H. WATSON,

Medical Officer of Health.



## STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA

Area (including foreshore) = 2,246 acres  
 Population:- Registrar General's estimate for 1952....9,410  
 Rateable Value = £71,967  
 Sum represented by a penny rate = £280. 12. 3d.

### VITAL STATISTICS

#### Live Births

	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
Legitimate	81	62	143
Illegitimate	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>
	<u>83</u>	<u>63</u>	<u>146</u>

Birth Rate per 1,000 of estimated resident population 15.52  
     Corrected Birth Rate 17.23  
     Comparative figure for England and Wales 15.3

Still Births ... .. Nil

Still Birth Rate per 1,000 total (live & stil) births Nil

Death Rate      Total number of deaths 124  
Death Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population 13.18  
     Corrected Death Rate 10.28  
     Comparative figure for England and Wales 11.3

#### Infantile Mortality (Deaths of infants under one year of age)

Legitimate	2
Illegitimate	<u>-</u>
	<u>2</u>

Rate of all infants per 1,000 births 13.70  
 Rate of all legitimate infants per 1,000 legitimate  
     live births 13.99  
 Rate for all illegitimate infants per 1,000 illegitimate  
     live births Nil

#### Deaths

Out of a total of 124 deaths, 73 occurred in persons over the age of 70 years. The primary cause of death was heart disease (43) with cancer second (25).



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# CAUSES OF DEATH DURING 1952

CAUSE OF DEATH	M	F	Total
ALL CAUSES	48	76	124
1. Tuberculosis, respiratory	-	-	-
2. Tuberculosis, other	-	-	-
3. Syphilitic disease	-	-	-
4. Diphtheria	-	-	-
5. Whooping cough	-	-	-
6. Meningococcal infections	-	-	-
7. Acute poliomyelitis	-	-	-
8. Measles	-	-	-
9. Other infective and parasitic diseases	-	-	-
10. Malignant neoplasm - stomach	4	1	5
11. Malignant neoplasm - lung & bronchus	-	1	1
12. Malignant neoplasm - breast	-	3	3
13. Malignant neoplasm - uterus	-	3	3
14. Other malignant and lymphatic neoplasms	4	9	13
15. Leukaemia, aleukaemia	-	-	-
16. Diabetes	-	-	-
17. Vascular lesions of the nervous system	7	14	21
18. Coronary disease, angina	4	10	14
19. Hypertension with heart disease	-	1	1
20. Other heart disease	15	13	28
21. Other circulatory disease	2	5	7
22. Influenza	1	2	3
23. Pneumonia	-	1	1
24. Bronchitis	4	3	7
25. Other diseases of the respiratory system	-	1	1
26. Ulcer of stomach and duodenum	1	-	1
27. Gastro-enteritis and diarrhoea	-	2	2
28. Nephritis and nephrosis	-	-	-
29. Hyperplasia of prostate	2	-	2
30. Pregnancy, childbirth and abortion	-	-	-
31. Congenital malformations	1	-	1
32. Other defined and ill-defined diseases	2	5	7
33. Motor vehicle accidents	1	-	1
34. All other accidents	-	2	2
35. Suicide	-	-	-
36. Homicide and operations of war	-	-	-

The Crude Death Rate for the past nine years is as follows:-

1944	1945	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952
15.1	17.8	13.2	13.8	11.7	12.5	14.01	17.77	13.18





PREVALENCE AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS AND  
CONTAGIOUS DISEASES

The following table sets out the cases of notifiable diseases that occurred in the Urban District during 1952. The table is drawn up after making the necessary corrections in diagnosis by either the practitioners or the Medical Officers at the Isolation Hospitals.

Disease	Cases Notified
Measles	42
Scarlet Fever	5
Whooping Cough	55
Pneumonia	6
Malaria	1
Food Poisoning	1
Glandular Fever	1
Total	111

The total of 111 is about half the corresponding figure for the previous year. It should be noted that whooping cough shows a rise with 55 notifications, as compared with 36. This disease is frequently followed by complications affecting the respiratory system, which cause considerable ill health, especially during school life and which require prolonged treatment before cure is affected.

It is now possible to immunise children against whooping cough and diphtheria at the same time, although research is still being carried out by the Medical Research Council to determine the most efficacious vaccine against whooping cough, and preliminary reports are most encouraging. A considerable reduction in the incidence of whooping cough would be a major advance in the field of preventive medicine.

Diphtheria.

No cases of diphtheria were notified. This satisfactory state of affairs is almost entirely due to the nation wide immunisation campaign which was begun in 1942. The following table shows the incidence and number of deaths from diphtheria in England and Wales since 1944, and clearly shows the progress which has been made.

Year	Deaths	Corrected Notifications
1944	934	23,199
1945	722	18,596
1946	472	11,986
1947	244	5,609
1948	156	3,575
1949	84	1,890
1950	49	962
1951	33	664
1952	31 +	274 ⊕
+ provisional		⊕ 9 months only

The Council undertook a local publicity campaign during the year and following representations made to them the County Council made arrangements for children to be immunised at the Infant Welfare Clinics held at Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge.



The following table shows the number of children immunised during the year. Although these numbers cannot be regarded as entirely satisfactory, indications are that the position regarding immunisation in the District is improving.

Aged under 5 years	Aged 5 - 15	Total
61	48	109

#### Food Poisoning.

One case of Food Poisoning was notified during the year. This was a single case in which the patient was ill for approximately 48 hours, and although it was never definitely proved, it was considered that the illness was caused by the consumption of tinned meat.

#### Tuberculosis.

There were 9 cases of respiratory tuberculosis notified during the year. No cases of non-respiratory tuberculosis were notified. The figure for respiratory cases is 4 less than the previous year.

At the end of the year a Mass Radiography Unit visited the area, and the attendance was most satisfactory. 614 males and 464 females were examined and nine cases of unsuspected tuberculosis which were considered active were brought to light. A further 24 cases of inactive tuberculosis were discovered, and where necessary, follow up was arranged. A number of non-tuberculous conditions were also discovered.

#### Infantile Paralysis.

Although there was a moderate incidence of infantile paralysis in Somerset, no cases were notified in this area.

#### Section 47 of the National Assistance Act, 1948.

This section provides for the removal to a suitable place, of persons who are in need of care and attention through age or disease. It was not found necessary to take any statutory action under this section during the year 1952.

#### SANITARY CONDITIONS OF THE AREA.

##### 1. Water Supply.

The water supply of the District has been satisfactory both in quality and quantity. The pressure drops off during the peak holiday season, but it has not been necessary to cut off the supply, and it is hoped that the deficiency will be eliminated when the Council's new scheme for additional supply is in full operation.

Bacteriological examination of the raw water was carried out on 15 occasions, and 13 were satisfactory and 2 unsatisfactory.

Bacteriological examination of the treated water in supply was satisfactory on 39 of the 41 occasions on which it was examined.

On chemical analysis the water was reported as being "very hard", the hardness being mainly of a temporary nature.



## 2. Milk Supplies

- (a) The number of Registered Distributors is 10.  
(b) The number of Registered Dairy Premises is 5.

Four supplementary licences have been issued to distributors whose dairies are outside the area.

### Milk Sampling.

30 samples of Tuberculin Tested milk were taken, and of these 24 were satisfactory and 6 unsatisfactory.

12 samples of Pasteurised milk were taken, 11 of which were satisfactory and 1 unsatisfactory.

14 samples of milk were taken for Biological Examination. 12 were satisfactory and 2 unsatisfactory. 15

## 3. Ice Cream.

The number of premises registered for manufacture  
and sale ... .. 5  
For retail only ... .. 40

The number of samples taken is as follows:-

	<u>Hot Mix.</u>	<u>Cold Mix.</u>
Grade 1.	39	9
Grade 2.	13	6
Grade 3.	2	3
Grade 4.	2	-

Sampling results have proved satisfactory and standards of cleanliness are well maintained.

## 4. Slaughter Houses.

There is 1 in use under the Ministry of Food (this is at the Highbridge Bacon Co. Ltd.); we have no Slaughter House in use where horses are slaughtered for human consumption.

The total number of animals slaughtered during the year was 76,625.

The following was condemned as unfit for human consumption:-

<u>1. All diseases except Tuberculosis.</u>	<u>Number of pigs</u>
Whole carcasses condemned.	48
Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned.	2,170
<u>2. Tuberculosis only.</u>	
Whole carcasses condemned.	13
Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned.	10,161

## 5. Premises where food is prepared.

The number registered under Section 14 of the Food and Drugs Act 1938, is 14. Frequent inspections are made to ensure satisfactory conditions.





6. Knackers Yards.

One knackers yard is registered in this District, and is visited frequently.

7. Sewage Disposal.

The Council's Surveyor has been requested to report on sewage disposal throughout the whole area. Apart from a few isolated cases, main drainage is available in the area.

The only work in connection with sewage carried out during the year consisted of local improvements to old sewers.

